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5-31-1831

### William Berkeley Lewis letter to Moses Dawson

William Berkeley Lewis

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Washington 31 May 1831

My Dear Sir,

(Strictly confidential)

You have seen the frequent attacks made on me lately by the Telegraph. These assaults I have no doubt are to be followed up, and the American Sentinel, Phila, has joined in the hue & cry. I think justice to myself requires that I should make known to my distant friends the reasons and motives of these attacks. - They are, then, simply because I would not consent to assist in thrusting every body else aside to make room for John C. Calhoun. If I could have been guilty of Idolatry, and consented to worship the great Nullifier of the South, in Douglass's estimation I would have been one of the finest fellows in the Country. You then would have heard nothing of imminent conversations distorted and misrepresented. It is intended by that most detestable faction to drive Major Barry, Mr. Wendell and myself from our situations, or to render us so odious to the community at large, as to destroy whatever influence we might be supposed to have. You will see from his paper of yesterday evening, Green re-

presents



represents me as offering patronage to Editors, and offices to individuals, both of which are positions false heads. I had neither the one nor the other to give, but individuals came to see me, while I was in Phil<sup>a</sup> to talk to me about both. Concerning the office it was the wish of the President that I should see if there was any situation in the Custom House that would be acceptable to the individual in question - and I did also say to a friend of the President, proprietor of a newspaper, that I thought the patronage of the Government should be equally distributed among the friends of the Administration and that it was wrong to give it entirely to one (as was the case with the Sentinel) and that one at best but a looker-on friend. This no doubt has given great offence to the Ed. of that Calhoun & Ingham print. But the great object of Driff Green is to induce the belief that I am meddling with things that don't belong to me, and representing myself as having great influence over the President himself. In this way he expects to render me obnoxious to the people, and injure the President.

Those who know me will not attribute to me any such vanity or ambition. My only object has been to serve faithfully to me the President. I never seek out any one for political purposes, but if gentlemen come to me I can see no good reason why I should <sup>not</sup> converse with them. Driff's opinion to the contrary notwithstanding. The President himself often desires me to obtain information for him; and I never have made any proposition to any one about office without being so directed by the President. - It is not necessary for me to say more upon this subject - You must at once see the drift and object of Mr. Calhoun's friends - The proceedings in Nashville I have <sup>learned</sup> no origination in this place. Mr. Calhoun has many partisans there, they united with some envious and malicious persons, are endeavoring to get up an excitement at home against me because they suppose it will have a more powerful effect. Many of the partisans people of that State, I have no doubt, have been deluded by these partisans of his, who, as soon as they are made to understand the thing,



will have very different feelings upon the subject. I regret to say that perhaps a majority of our members of Congress are Calhoun men, and I am apprehensive, they, too, are engaged in blowing up the flame of excitement against me. I am known to be no Mullifin or friend of Calhoun, and this is enough for them and Duff - I must be hunted down. It is a pity that Duff does not enlighten the nation with his conversations - with his intrigues and cabals. - The truth is he has become such a reckless liar that no one here believes a single word he says. In his paper of yesterday <sup>evening</sup> he says: "The last three numbers of the Globe say nothing against the R. S. Bark in consequence of instructions from me" - Did you ever hear a more impudent falsehood? I believe every one of the numbers <sup>it</sup> spoken of has some thing against it. Duff himself is now silent upon that question - it is rumored that the Bark has lately loaned him \$20,000! -

In communicating to you the above facts permit me to say that they are not intended



for publication, but merely to apprise you of what is going on here, and thereby to enable you to understand the various Telegraph. If you think it is necessary to say anything upon the subject, it will be proper that no one but yourself should see this letter. The manner of treating ~~of~~ it, of course, I leave to your own discretion; but at the same time I would suggest whether it would not be well to expose the motives of these attacks - to draw a comparison between the old and Sincere friends of the President and his grotesque friends - and to treat my supposed influence with the President with ridicule - as a force too contemptible for serious comment. This I should think, would be the proper course. If there be any complaints, as to the manner of discharging my official duties they have never come to my ears. I have given, I may say almost universal satisfaction. No man ever comes to my office, that is not treated with politeness and his business promptly attended to. Is not this sufficient? No, Jeff Green says

Mr. Kendall



(15)  
Mr. Knapp and myself must be  
put down, or there is no safety for  
him or Santher politicians. This  
has been stated to me, in confi-  
dence, since I commenced this letter;  
and I dare say its true.

The President has not yet  
appointed a Secretary of War - pub-  
lic opinion seems to point more  
distinctly to Cal. Drayton than any  
other person. Some of our friends  
think Gov. Cass would be a good  
appointment. Whom the indivi-  
dual will be I cannot say pos-  
itively.

Would it not be well  
to have a conversation (I do not  
wish any one to see this letter) with  
Mr. Reynolds\* with regard to Duff,  
his course, and his motives? and  
if you were to write to our friend  
Penn of Louisville for the same  
purpose, it might have a good  
effect; but if you do so make no  
allusion to my having written you.

Your friend W. Harris

\* Publisher of the Daily Democratic paper in Cincinnati

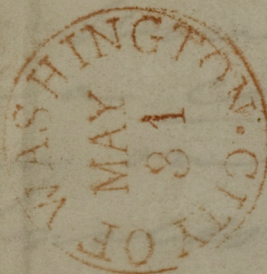
(16)  
P.S. The President is in my good health,  
and in good spirits. Let me hear  
from you soon. M. P. L.

Would it not be well to speak of the  
pimps and spies of Calhoun & his  
friend Duff? a man can't sneeze  
but it is forthwith Telegraphed.



Geo M Davis

PAID



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